



# Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation

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## **Statement of Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation on EPA Decision to Sample Water in Dimock, PA**

Recently, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced its intention to sample water in Dimock Township, Pennsylvania. While taking water samples is certainly something EPA does from time to time, Cabot is concerned that this recent action may be more of an attempt to advance a political agenda hostile to shale gas development rather than a principled effort to address environmental concerns in the area.

As one of the first developers in the Marcellus shale to recognize the importance of this exceptional resource for our Nation's future, we have been working closely with the Dimock community and with state and local regulators in the area. We intend to continue to do so, and to work with the EPA as well. Nevertheless, we have some specific concerns with EPA's current approach:

1. EPA has presented no credible evidence to suggest that its new sampling initiative is a wise use of resources given the collection and analysis of over 2000 water wells that has already occurred in the area. Over ten thousand pages of this data have been provided to EPA. As the great majority of our neighbors in Dimock know, Cabot works closely with them in addressing their concerns and has become a valued member of the community.
2. EPA's concerns are inconsistent with the findings of state regulators who have concluded after extensive investigation that Dimock drinking water meets regulatory standards. State regulators are closest to the facts, and most familiar with ground water and geological formations in the area. Indeed, state regulators have termed EPA's understanding of the issues in Dimock as "rudimentary."

Despite decades of experience on the part of state regulators in addressing and assessing oil and gas activities, the Agency appears to be unwilling to engage in meaningful cooperation - not just at Dimock but in other noteworthy production areas in the United States like Texas and Wyoming. EPA's position is puzzling in light of direction from the President to work with states and to advance the development of America's shale resources.

3. EPA's initiative marks a change in position for the Agency, unsupported by any new facts. As recently as December 2011, EPA told Dimock residents that their drinking water did not present a health threat. EPA has changed its tune without any credible argument. The so-called new information EPA has advanced deals with materials not used in the fracking process at Dimock and more closely associated with naturally-occurring sources or other industrial uses. Further, EPA knows that over 40 percent of Pennsylvania's water wells fail to meet standards on grounds more serious than EPA alleges here, and yet the Agency has not launched efforts to address these more serious issues.

In our view, what is needed is an objective approach to dealing with community concerns - something missing in recent EPA actions. EPA's changing posture on sampling in Dimock is indicative of a broader problem of inconsistency with scientific process and a lack of cooperation with state and private sector parties. Despite this, Cabot hopes that we can work with EPA to further review existing data and to establish a firmer basis for Agency decision making.